

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T CANBERRA 1612

EXDIS (NOFORN)

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AS, KN, KS
SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN CONVERSATION WITH NORTH KOREA, SOVIET
UNION AND CHINA ON CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA

REF: CANBERRA 1091

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON MICHAEL COOK, ASST. SEC.
DFA MARCH 21 TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON AUSTRALIAN INTENTION TO CONTACT NORTH KOREANS. COOK STATED CONTACT HAD BEEN MADE IN JAKARTA NAD THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED AND HAD SUGGESTED NUMEROUS WAYS OF IMPROVING CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO COOK, AUSTRALIANS HAVE AGREED TO LOOK AT POSSIBILITY OF NORTH KOREAN TRADE UNION DELEGATION VISITING AUSTRALIA. HE WAS SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE SINCE ALTHOUGH PLEASED, NORTH KOREANS MIGHT FEEL SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED AT AUSTRALIAN APPROACH WHICH EMPHASIZED GOA WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

2. WITH REGARD TO GOA' S SOUNDING OUT BOTH MOSCOW AND PEKING TO SEE IF EITHER RUSSIA OR CHINA WOULD BE WILLING TO PARALLEL AUSTRALIAN ACTION WITH REGARD TO NORTH KOREA WITH ACTIONS OF THEIR OWN TOWARD SOUTH KOREA, COOK SIAD
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RESULTS HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTING. AUSTRALIAN REP IN MOSCOW WAS TOLD THAT SOVIET UNION DID NOT HAVE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA AND THAT THEY SAW NO NEED TO ESTABLISH THEM NOW. IN PEKING, COOK SAID, RESPONSE WAS LESS DIRECT AND WAS TO EFFECT THAT CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTH KOREA WOULD DEPEND GOOD DEAL UPON PROGRESS OF NORTH-SOUTH TALKS AND ATTITUDES WHICH DEVELOPED AS RESULT OF TALKS. IN SUM, COOK SAID, PROSPECT IS NOT BRIGHT THAT EITHER RUSSIA OR CHINA WILL APPROACH SOUTH KOREA TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS. HIS REASONING, IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING, IS THAT NEITHER ONE CAN AFFORD TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP AND UNTIL SITUATION IN KOREA ITSELF CHANGES, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT EITHER RUSSIA OR CHINA WILL MOVE IN DIRECTION SUGGESTED BY AUSTRALIANS.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT PROSED VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER KIM OF SOUTH KOREA, COOK CONFIRMED THAT KIM MIGHT COME TOWARD END OF MAY WHEN THERE APPEARED TO BE TIME IN BUSY AUSTRALIAN SCHEDULE OF MEETING AND GREETING OFFICIAL VISITORS TO CANBERRA. COOK SAID LETTER FROM PRESIDENT PARK OF SOUTH KOREA REGARDING PROPOSED AUSTRALIAN OVERATURES TO NORTH KOREA HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND FIRMLY BUT POLITELY ANSWERED BY PM WHITLAM TO EFFECT THAT AUSTRALIA WAS GOING AHEAD AS PLANNED. COOK VOLUNTEERED THAT MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE CAIRNS PLANS TO STOP IN SEOUL EN ROUTE TO CHINA TO PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL ROK- AUSTRALIAN TRADE TALKS IN APRIL.
RICE

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